

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health



April 29, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you may have seen in the news the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified a new type of flu, swine flu, in the United States. The CDC expects to find more cases in the United States and we are monitoring the situation closely. Although there are no known cases of swine flu in the District of Columbia at this time, it is a disease that is easily spread from person to person. There are simple steps that you and your children can take to prevent the spread of the swine flu virus and other diseases.

Cover your cough and sneezes to help stop germs from entering the air:

- Ideally you should cough or sneeze into a disposal tissue.
- If you do not have a disposable tissue, you can cough or sneeze into the elbow of your sleeves, not into your hands.
- After coughing or sneezing, you should wash your hands with soap and water.

Frequent hand washing prevents the transfer of diseases:

- Use soap and water, lathering well above the wrists and rub your hands together for at least 15-20 seconds.
- A good way to make sure your children are scrubbing their hands for the right amount of time is to sing the Happy Birthday or Row, Row, Row Your Boat songs twice.
- Once you are finished scrubbing rinse and dry your hands.
- Hand sanitizers are a good temporary solution, but should not replace washing hands with soap and water.

If your child should develop any symptoms of the flu, such as feeling tired, cough, runny nose, sore throat and a temperature of 100 degrees or higher it is important that you keep him/her at home and contact your healthcare provider to obtain a medical evaluation.

Should you have any questions or concerns, call the Department of Health at (202) 442-5859, or visit <http://www.k12.dc.us/media/swine-flu-2009/>.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pierre Vigilance
Director, Department of Health

Michelle Rhee
Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools